



Corporate Worship: A Heavenly Dialogue

Are you interested in learning more about why we structure our worship service the way that we do? Every worship service in Scripture follows a basic pattern: glorify God, confess guilt, receive grace, express gratitude (Ex. 24; 2 Chron. 5-7; Rev. 4-22). Furthermore, this pattern is expressed as a dialogue between God and His people throughout worship, wherein God speaks and we respond. This is the pattern we want to emulate on Sunday mornings.

Call to Worship: God summons us to worship Him and enter into His presence. As a king to a servant and a father to a child, God calls us out of the darkness of this world and into the light of His truth (Ex. 19; 2 Chron. 5:2-5).

Song of Praise: We respond to God in praise for inviting us into His presence. This continues the ongoing dialogue between God and His gathered people (2 Chron. 5:11-14; Col. 3:16).

Creeds and Confessions: Reciting creeds and confessions together remind us of the essential doctrines ("the trustworthy sayings") that unite us in Christ. It also further reminds us of the link we have with those who have gone before us in the Christian pilgrimage (Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Tim. 1:15, 3:1, 4:7-9; Jude 3).

Prayers: Throughout worship, there will be various kinds of prayers (invocation, intercession, confession, and illumination). Prayer demonstrates our delight and ever-growing need to commune with God triune (2 Chron. 6:12-42).

Confession of Sin/Assurance of Pardon: Without confession, sin hides, eludes, and continues to destroy self and neighbor. But when we confess our sins, we experience the gospel afresh, face our sins, and receive the cleansing forgiveness only Jesus provides (2 Chron. 5:6; Ps. 66:18).

The Reading and Preaching of the Word: This is the climax of worship. God speaks to us and declares who He is and what He has done for us in Christ. After the reading of God's word, the reader says, "This is the word of the Lord." The congregation responds, "Thanks be to God" (Ex. 24:7a; 2 Chron. 6:1-11).

The Lord's Supper: Like every meal, there is a host and a guest. In corporate worship, God is the host and we are His guests. God spreads the table as a spiritual feast before us and we partake in His renewing love and devotion to His church (Ex. 24:11; 2 Chron. 7:1-2; Matt. 26:26).

Benediction: Finally, we are sent out, with arms raised, with a new name, singing a new song, as God pronounces His blessing upon us (Lev. 9:22; 2 Chron. 7:10; Luke 24:50).

Learning a liturgy like this may be uncomfortable for you, maybe even a little strange. That is ok. In one sense, it should be. In just about everything we do in life, we are the focus, but not here. God is. Over time, we hope that you find this liturgy pattern enriching and engaging, equipping you to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.